

Between Two Worlds

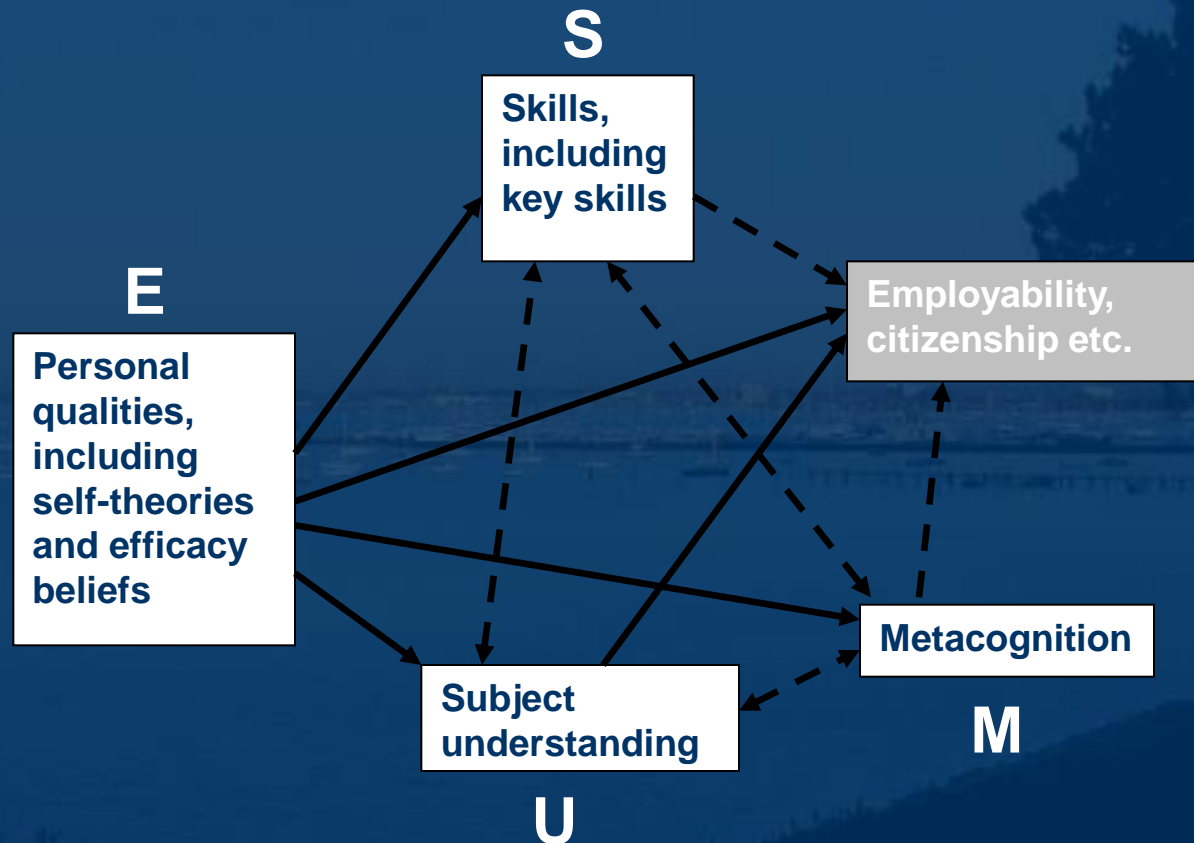
Unpacking Performance and
Learning







The USEM model of employability



USEM

- subject-specific Understanding
 - Key outcome of HE
- Skills
 - Readily measured?
 - Unproblematically transferred from setting to setting?
- personal qualities incl Efficacy beliefs & self theories
 - Extent to which students feel they might be able to make a difference (not every time, but in a probabilistic way)
- Metacognition
 - Self-awareness regarding own learning
 - Capacity to reflect on, in and for action

Self theories in motivation, personality & development

- Entity theories
 - Belief that their intelligence and other personality traits are 'fixed'
 - Each trait is 'portrayed as an entity that dwells within us and that we can't change'
- Incremental theories
 - Intelligence and personality traits can be cultivated through learning
- Persistence
 - Correspondence between type of theory and the degree of persistence in the face of difficulty
 - Those who interpret the world with incremental theories are much more likely to persist and therefore more likely to succeed on new or difficult tasks

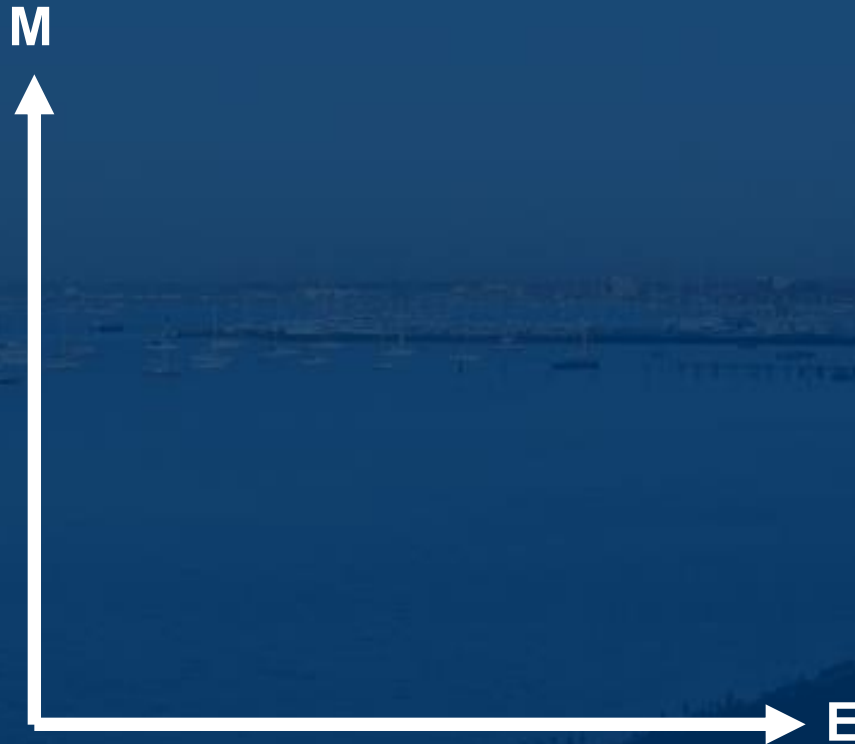
Attributional patterns, locus of control and motivational concomitants



Attributional patterns, locus of control and motivational concomitants

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. E	1	2	3	4
2. E	4	3	2	1
3. M	1	2	3	4
4. M	4	3	2	1
5. E	4	3	2	1
6. E	1	2	3	4
7. M	4	3	2	1
8. M	1	2	3	4
9. M	4	3	2	1
10. E	1	2	3	4
11. M	1	2	3	4
12. E	4	3	2	1

Attributional patterns, locus of control and motivational concomitants



Attributional patterns, locus of control and motivational concomitants

Self-theories	Internal attributions (high internal locus of control)	External attributions (low internal locus of control)
Incremental theories – things are malleable, people make a difference	A. Effort is more important: the more effort we make, the more we are likely to succeed. People here see intelligence, for example, as a social and practical achievement, not as a God-given.	B. Luck, fate and chance play a great part in life. Some people have all the luck, others don't. That said, luck might change, especially if our efforts make us well placed to seize the chance.
Entity theories – things are fixed and people have little chance of making a difference	C. Fixed traits, such as intelligence, essentially determine what we can and cannot do. People here believe that they do well because they are naturally clever or fail because they were born stupid.	D. Specific circumstances keep holding us back or usually explain our success. This victim thinking can foster inertia: 'what's the point of trying?'

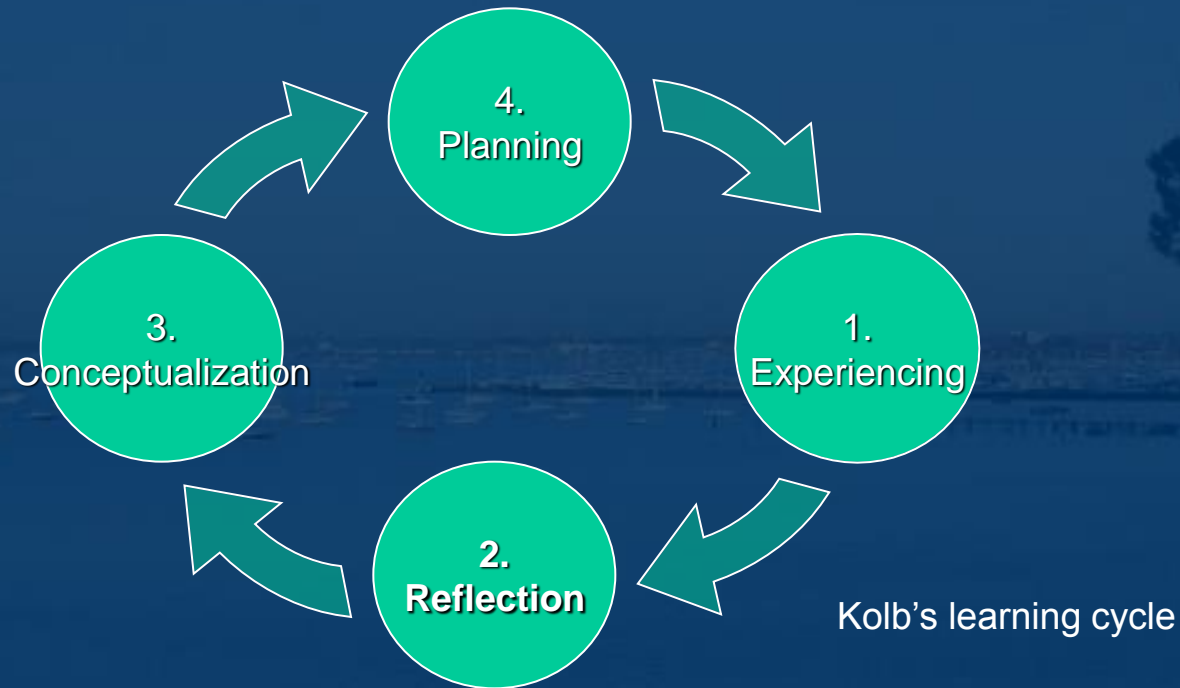
Tension between two worlds

- Professional knowledge - functioning, specific and pragmatic; deals with executing, applying and making priorities
- University knowledge - declarative, abstract and conceptual; deals with labelling, differentiating, elaborating and justifying. (Leinhardt et al 1995)
- Map-reading is characterised by technical knowledge, standards and professional boundaries
- Map-making uses frames of reference to approach the territory.
- 'An education in map-reading does not guarantee development of the abilities required for map-making.' (Lester 1999)

Reflection in assessment

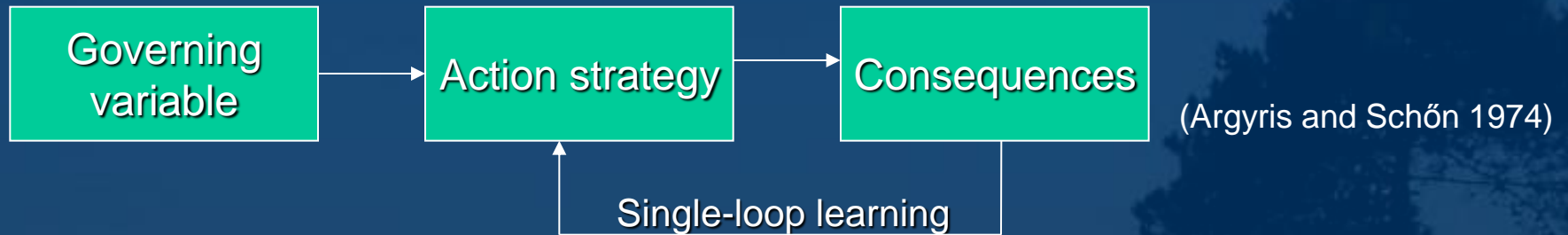
- Without reflection learning fails to develop from trial and error learning to higher levels of learning. (Bateson 1973)
- The imperative to do well academically discourages students from engaging in honest and open reflection. (Hargreaves 2003)
- Assessment can be understood only in terms of the student's attempt to influence the assessors. (Holmes 1995)

Reflection in experiential learning



A key role of reflection is to reveal theory-in-use and explore the nature of the fit with espoused theory.

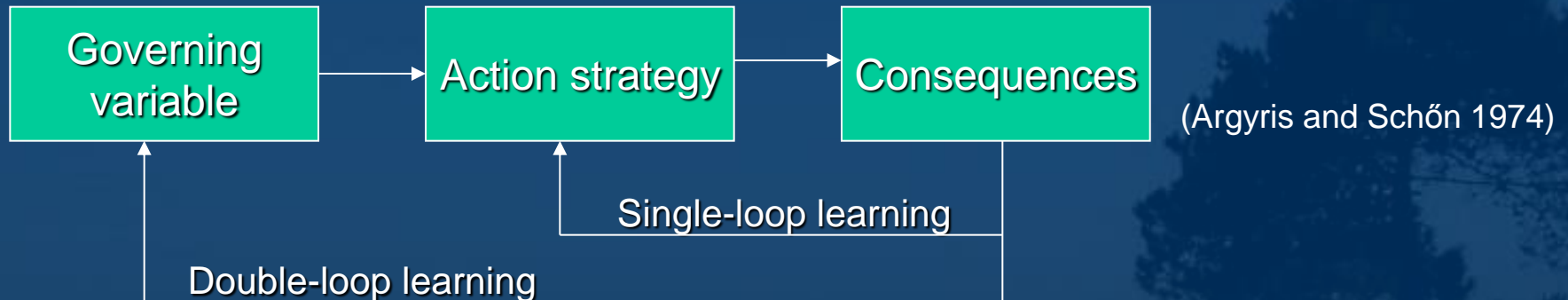
Learning loops



Single-loop learning

- Single feedback loop connects outcomes to strategies
- Assumptions modified to keep performance within range set by norms
- Processes tend to be self-seeking
- Emphasis on techniques and improving efficiency

Learning loops



Single-loop learning


- Single feedback loop connects outcomes to strategies
- Assumptions modified to keep performance within range set by norms
- Processes tend to be self-seeking
- Emphasis on techniques and improving efficiency

Double-loop learning

- Involves questioning assumptions behind goals and strategies
- Modifies norms that define effective performance
- More creative and reflexive
- Processes can be disconfirmable
- Considers 'notions of the good'

Learning loops

- Single loop
 - Make a mistake and reflect on it
 - Single loop 'fit for purpose' tests operate within boundaries set by the purpose.
- Double loop
 - Reflect critically on theory-in-action
 - No longer necessary to go through entire learning circle in order to develop theory further
 - Sufficient to readjust the theory through double-loop learning
 - Double loop test of validity considers the congruence of objectives in broader context and questions assumptions.



Case study: the craft of project management

Case study:

the craft of project management

- Term 1: Theory
 - Online discussion – feedback after each activity
 - Individual exercises
 - Initial solution posted to blog
 - Model answer posted by tutor
 - Students add comment to blog comparing answers
- Term 2: Apply theory on a real project
 - Self and peer feedback and assessment x 4
 - Project presentations
 - Critical review

Theory-in-use characteristics

Model I

- Achieve the purpose as the actor defines it
- Win, do not loose
- Suppress negative feelings
- Emphasize rationality
- Control environment and task unilaterally
- Protect self and others unilaterally
- Face-saving moves

(Adapted from Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith 1985)

Model II

- Valid information
- Free and informed choice
- Internal commitment
- Sharing control
- Participation in design and implementation of action
- Surfacing conflicting view
- Increased likelihood of double-loop learning

(Adapted from Anderson 1997)

Case study:

Lessons applied

- Self theories are relevant for learning and employability
 - Provide opportunities for more than one attempt
- High stakes assessment can drive out learning
 - Assess reflection as well or instead of product
- Encourage Mode II theory-in-use by valuing:
 - Participation
 - Frames of reference
 - Decision-making

References

- Anderson, L. (1997) *Argyris and Schön's theory on congruence and learning* [On line]. Available at <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/sawd/arr/argyris.html>
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R., & McLain Smith, D. (1985) *Action science: concepts, methods, and skills for research and intervention*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Argyris, M. and Schön, D. (1974) *Theory in Practice. Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Back, K. M. and Seaker, R. (2004) 'Project Performance: Implications of personality Preferences and Double Loop Learning' *Journal of American Academy of Business, Cambridge*. Vol. 4 Iss. 1-2 pg 292
- Bateson, G. (1973) *Steps to and Ecology of Mind*. London: Paladin
- Dweck, C. S. (1999) *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality and Development*. Philadelphia, USA: Taylor & Francis
- Hargreaves, J. (2003) 'So how do you feel about that? Assessing reflective practice'. *Nurse Education Today* Vol. 24 Iss. 3 pgs. 196-201 [On line]. Available at www.sciencedirect.com/science [Accessed 06/07/2004]
- Holmes, L. (1995) 'Competence and Capability: From 'Confidence Trick' to the Construction of the Graduate Identity' [On line]. Available at www.re-skill.org.uk/grads/cc_grdid.htm [Accessed: 24/3/05]
- Knight, P. T. and Yorke, M. (2003) *Assessment, Learning and Employability*. Maidenhead, Berks: SRHE and OU Press/McGraw-Hill
- Lester, S. (1999) 'From map-reader to map-maker: approaches to moving beyond knowledge and competence'. In O'Reilly, D., Cunningham, L. and Lester, S. (eds) *Developing the Capable Practitioner: Professional Capability through Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page

